THE USEFULNESSE OF *SPIRITUAL WISDOM* WITH A *TEMPORAL INHERITANCE.*

IN A

SERMON Preached *March*, 11*th.* $168\frac{8}{9}$. At the Entrance of a Young Man upon his Habitation and particular Calling.

And at his Requeſt Publiſhed By *T. CRUSO.*

1 CORINTH vii. 30.

——*And they that buy, as tho' they poſſeſſed not.*

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SERMON Preached March 1 1683. At the Entrance of a Young Man upon his Habitation and particular Calling.

And at his Request Published

By T. CROSSO.

To his Esteemed Friend.

MR. R. G.

SIR,

YOU cannot blame the inscribing of these *Papers to your self, as their just and proper* Patron, *because through* your own solicitation, *the matter contain'd in them was first delivered, and is now after this more publick manner recorded, principally for* your own use. *If any others receiv'd any benefit by the Hearing, or if any should hereafter by the Reading of it, as they ought to return the chief* praise *to God, (whose Spirit, I hope, assisted in the Composure, and from whom his servants have all their furniture for* every good word and work) *they do in the next place owe their* Thanks *to you. For you have*

(*eſpecially*) *by putting me upon ſuch a* ſecond ſervice, *manifeſted your unwillingneſs to reap the Fruit of this labour* alone, *aſwel as your charitable hopes, that it may produce* ſome *through the bleſsing of heaven; in which I heartily wiſh, that you be not diſappointed. All that I can ſay to encourage you, is only this, that I have not here ſtept*
Tit. 1. 4. *out of the road of the* common Faith, *but written the plaineſt Truths in the plaineſt method, and therefore 'tis ſo far fitted (though defective in many other reſpects) to anſwer the end of* common Edification; *nor is your Caſe ſo* peculiar, *but that Others may frequently be in the* ſame, *and ſtand in need of the* like *inſtructions.*

But I do not flatter you, when I tell you, that I am perſwaded better things of you, *than I can expect from this diſcourſe upon every ordinary ſuperficial Reader; men do ſeldom conſider, that the* word *which ſounds in their Ear, or is preſented*
John 12. 48. *to their Eye, ſhall help to* judge them at the laſt day; *and ſo, a trifling curſory peruſal of the moſt ſerious and important things, aggravates their account* hereafter, *though it does not influence their practice* here. *Multitudes, when they are at that*

Age,

Age, which you have arrived to, lay the foundation of a late and ineffual Repentance, and of remedileſs everlaſting miſery: They are eſtranged from the Womb, *and in that ſtate they continue, till they are falling into the* Grave, *under the heavy load of the* ſins of their Youth; *if they do take care to thrive and proſper in this World by* heaping up Riches, *they will be ſure to make their condition moſt wretched in the next by* Treaſuring up Wrath; *the* neglect *of their Souls, is as notorious, as the* (perhaps) *unneceſſary* Proviſion *which is made for their* Bodies; *when they lanch into the buſineſs of their ſeveral Profeſſions, the* getting of an Eſtate *is their only Aim, and in the purſuit of this, they* loſe *that which is* more worth than the whole World. *The* Wiſdom *recommended in the following Sermon, will be but* fooliſhneſs *to all ſuch, unleſs God is pleaſed to give them* other Spirits. Pſal. 58. 3.

You on the other hand, have begun *ſo well* with God, *that I therefore chearfully expect your happy* progreſs: *I doubt not but that you have fixt your eye, and* ſet your heart, aright, *by propoſing the* beſt End, *and chuſing the* beſt Part; *never-*

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theleſs ſeeing your lot is caſt into ſuch a time of Temptation, and every circumſtance of humane Life is ſo full of Snares, and there is a ſpecial
Eccl. 11.10. vanity in youth, there is need of conſtant watchfulneſs and care, and frequent renewing your Holy Reſolutions, as well as Invocation of God for help, that your Bow which yet abides in ſtrength, may never Break or Slacken, through the enticements of evil Company, the Deceitfulneſs of Riches, or power of Indwelling Sin. You may
Pet. 4.4. meet with ſome who think it ſtrange, that you run not with them to the ſame Exceſs of Riot, and other debauchery; and the Fleſh is ſtill Luſting againſt the Spirit in the moſt improved and mortified Chriſtians; and there is ſcarcely any lawful Employment, but what by an undue behaviour in it, may become ſin. I muſt therefore, while I take Comfort in your Pious beginnings, give you this Councel and Caution againſt a dangerous Revolt.

I lift up an hearty prayer for you, that the bleſſing of God out of Sion may reſt upon you, and all your concerns; that he may not be to you as the
Hoſ. 5.12. Moth, or as Rottenneſs, but as the cheriſhing Sun

Sun *and* fructifying Dew; *that neither your* Root, *nor* Leaf may wither; *that the* Fear of God *may be always* before your face, *and* his ſecret upon your Tabernacle; *that your* Soul *may be* like a watered Garden, *and an* Hedge *of Providence Planted* about *all which you have on every ſide; and that after you are carried through the ſeveral Changes and Periods of time, the* God whom you ſerve, *may be your* Inheritance *and* Portion *to Eternity. So praying, and by all other poſſible means, which my Station or Capacity will afford for your Aſſiſtance, in any Spiritual matters, I ſhall very readily approve my ſelf,* Job 29. 4.

Your Moſt Faithful

Friend and Servant,

T. C.

May 22. 1689.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

The Uſefulneſs of *Spiritual Wiſdom* with a *Temporal Inheritance.*

ECCLES. 7. 11.

Wiſdom is good with an Inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that ſee the Sun.

IT is an old Obſervation of *Solomon*, the Author of this Book, that *there is no new thing under the Sun.* Among the many Inſtances, which there are of the Truth of it, This may be reckon'd for One, that there are no *New Complaints.* Every Generation is apt to repeat the *ſame murmuring Queſtion, What is the Cauſe that the former Dayes were better than theſe?* (as in the words immediately preceding the Text) Our Streets were never free from this *Complaining*, and probably never will be; the Mouths of our Progenitors were full of it *heretofore*, and ſo are Ours *now*, and they that come after us, are as likely to continue it *to the end* of the World. *Solomon* tells us here, that this ſprings from a fooliſh Impatience; Men do not *enquire wiſely* in this matter. It is certain, that ſince the entrance of Sin into the World, which is the Root and Foundation of all Calamities, the *Dayes* have been always *Evil*, more or

chap. 1. 9.

chap. 7. 10.

leſs; and yet every *Age*, through the Mercy of Gods Providence, hath enjoyed ſome *Good* to ballance the Evil; therefore inſtead of finding fault with the *Times* in which we live, (which is indeed to quarrel with God's caſting of our Lot, and guiding of Events) we ſhould rather conſider and cenſure what is amiſs in *our ſelves*. If we were as we ought to be, we might very well improve the *worſt* of Times, but our own defects and diſorders will make us miſcarry in the *beſt*. From hence the *Wiſe Man* ſeems to take the occaſion of recommending *Wiſdom* in this place, *ver.* 11.

Four Queſtions are neceſſary to be reſolved in the *Opening* of the Words.

I. What is meant by *Wiſdom* here? Anſ. In *three* things.

1 King. 4. 29. 1. It does not ſignifie ſuch a *largeneſs of heart*, as *Solomon* himſelf had, who could ſearch into the Nature and Reaſon of things, beyond any that were Gen. 2. 19,20. before him. (*Adam* onely excepted, who *gave names* to every Creature.) Such a comprehenſive Mind, and vaſt underſtanding was Gods *peculiar* Gift to him; and beſides, it muſt be owned, that the great Intellectual Abilities of others many times prove their Snare, and they go to *Hell* with ſuch extraordinary 1 Cor. 1. 26. *Light*. The Apoſtle ſays, that *Not many wiſe men after the fleſh are called*; perſons of the meaneſt parts do very commonly *go into the kingdom of God before* the learned.

2. The Holy Ghoſt here does not mean that *Skill* and *Prudence*, which is exercis'd in the getting, increaſing

or

or preſerving of *Eſtates*. So the *childrenof this world* Luk. 16. 8. *are wiſe in their generation*, and uſually proſper moſt with it. 'Tis true, a fit meaſure of ſuch Wiſdom is very neceſſary in the managing of every ones *particular Employment* and Vocation; it's no prejudice to a *Good Man*, that he *guides his affairs with diſcretion*, Pſal. 112. 5. but a part of his juſt commendation; for elſe by his ignorance and folly he may ſoon ruine himſelf, and all that belong to him. But men may be thus Wiſe, and yet be Miſerable. And therefore

3. The Wiſdom here meant, is no other than *ſerious Religion*. This is the moſt general ſenſe of the word in the Holy Scripture, and more particularly in the Books of *this* Inſpired Author. *All other* Wiſdom is inſignificant without this, and *this of it ſelf* is uſeful to the beſt purpoſes. We learn from *Moſes*, that thoſe *Nations which keep and do the commandments of God*, are indeed a *wiſe and underſtanding people*. *Job* mentions it as Gods immediate *ſaying to Man*, *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom*, &c. Deut. 4. 6. Job 28. 28. And the *Pſalmiſt* agrees with both, in telling us, that *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom*, &c. Pſal. 111. 10. Wicked Men, whatever other Qualifications and Endowments they may have, which are valuable in their kind, muſt be look'd upon as the *Real Fools in Iſrael*. We cannot judge any one truly wiſe, who wants *Grace*, whereby to *ſerve God*, and *his Generation*.

II. What are we to underſtand by *an Inheritance* in this place? Anſw. In two things.

1. It muſt not be reſtrained literally and ſtrictly to ſuch an Eſtate *onely*, as *deſcends upon us from others* by Legal right, or by their free and Arbitrary Bounty;

the *Inheritance* here intended may be *gotten* by a mans *own industry* and Care, though Relatives and Friends may have *left* him as little in the World, as they *carried* out of it.

2. Therefore it muſt be taken in the largeſt ſenſe, to ſignifie a *moderate ſhare of worldly or Temporal poſſeſſions*; whatſoever will comfortably maintain and ſupport us in this life. And this is expreſt by an [Inheritance,] becauſe that is accounted the beſt, the moſt ſolid, and *Real* Eſtate: But there is no mention of any limited *quantity*, becauſe God gives to every one a *portion* of ſuch good things according as he pleaſeth, and Grace will teach us the improvement of a *Leſſer* portion, when Luſt will abuſe a *Greater*.

III. What is the meaning of the Conjunction of theſe Two? Wiſdom *is good with* an Inheritance. *Anſw.* In Three things.

1. It muſt not be underſtood ſo, as if Wiſdom were *not good without* an Inheritance. A man *rich toward God* is ſafe and happy, though he be *poor in this World*. Grace is a *good treaſure* in the Heart, though God do cut us ſhort in things that are without, which concern the body. It is not abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary to our main and *principal bleſſedneſs*, that we ſhould be fed with *food convenient for us*, (if we have *neceſſary food*, that will ſuffice) though it conduce very much to our *preſent well being*.

Prov. 30. 8.

2. The meaning is not, that Wiſdom and an inheritance are *equally good*. The Holy Ghoſt does not deſign to ſet theſe two upon *one Level*; for an Inheritance is not to be compared with wiſdom, but wiſdom

dom ought to be preferred to the largeſt Inheritances in the World. *My fruit is better than Gold, yea than fine Gold, and my Revenue than choice Silver.* *Solomon* puts them in the ballances together, and ſhews us which weighs moſt, in the words following the Text. *Wiſdom is a defence, and money is a defence, but the excellency of knowledge is, that it giveth Life to them that have it.* Prov. 8. 19. verſe 12.

3. Therefore the ſcope and ſenſe of this paſſage is, that when *wiſdom* is join'd with an Inheritance by the *Spirit* of God, and an *Inheritance* with wiſdom by the *Providence* of God, 'tis *beſt* for the perſon himſelf, and for all thoſe, who are within his influence and reach. They are neither of them *ſo good*, when they are *divided* and apart, as when they happen to be *linkt* in the ſame hand. 'Tis an happy diſpenſation when (like *righteouſneſs and peace,*) they *kiſs each other*; for their Union is both moſt *beautiful*, and moſt *advantagious.* Pſal. 85. 10.

IV. Why is the *profit* of theſe two limited *to them that ſee the Sun?* *Anſw.* The wiſe man does plainly intend by that expreſſion, *ſuch as are alive upon the Earth*; for it is during this mortal life alone, that we either *enjoy* or *need* the benefit of that glorious Luminary; there is *no Sun or Moon*, which ſhines to the inhabitants of the next World. But two things ſeem to be eſpecially hinted by this clauſe here. Rev. 21. 23.

1. That, *Our time of ſervice* ends at death. We *muſt work the works of God, while it is day*; all our opportunities of working ceaſe, when *the night comes.* *Solomon* admoniſhes us in this Book to ſet about our duty with all poſſible diligence, becauſe there is *no* John 9. 4.

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c. 9. 10. *knowledge nor wiſdom in the Grave*, whither we go. Rev. 14. 13. *Our works* indeed are ſaid to *follow us*, when we dye in the Lord; becauſe then we ſhall be *finally recompenced* according to them; but to ſpeak properly, all that we do for God, for our own Souls, or thoſe that are our Contemporaries, it muſt be done *on this ſide* of Eternity. That which is neglected now, cannot be performed hereafter.

2. No *Earthly things* can be of any *advantage to us*, beyond the preſent Life. Therefore they are called 1 John 3. 17. 1 Tim. 6. 7. *this Worlds goods*. As we *brought them not into the World* with us, ſo neither can we *carry them out*; and if we could, they would avail us nothing; they cannot *add* to the happineſs of the *glorified* in Heaven, nor *take away* from the miſery of the *damned* in Hell. Prov. 11. 4. They *profit not in the day of wrath*; they will neither *prevent*, nor *alter* the ſentence, at the particular or univerſal judgment. The *ruſt* of mens *Silver and* Jam. 5. 3. *Gold* may *eat their Fleſh like Fire*, but nothing is ſufficient to *purchaſe* them ſo much as a *drop of water*. The *ſubſtance* which we leave behind us, does then periſh to us, in reſpect of its *Uſe*: and however ſerviceable or helpful it may be to thoſe that *ſurvive*, it is utterly inſignificant to them that are *departed*.

The *Obſervation* which the words thus explain'd, do offer to our further Thoughts, is this, That

Doct. *Holy Wiſdom with a competent Inheritance, is a very profitable good.*

In the handling of this, I ſhall endeavour four Things.

I. Firſt, To ſhew, wherein Holy Wiſdom ought chiefly to diſcover it ſelf. Se-

Secondly, What may be juſtly accounted a competent Inheritance. II.

Thirdly, How the Profitableneſs of both together does appear. III.

Laſtly, Apply the whole. IV.

The *firſt* thing, is to ſhew, wherein holy ſpiritual *wiſdom* muſt be cheifly *exercis'd* and acted. There are Eight remarkable inſtances or diſcoveries of it, which all perſons ſhould look to. I.

Firſt, a *regular* and *ſeaſonable* performance of duties. Many actions, which as to the *Matter* of them hath been good, for want of Chriſtian wiſdom, have loſt much of their beauty, through the ill management of their *particular circumſtances*. The ordering and diſpoſing of *good* actions *well*, is a great thing in Religion. We may ſay of a work done, aſwell as of a *Word ſpoken in due ſeaſon, how good is it?* This *adds* a goodneſſe to it, which if done at another leſs convenient time, it would not have. We ſhould learn to put every thing into *method*, which our *Hand findeth to do*: That all our Duties may fall in their *proper place*, one after another, and not one diſturb or hinder another. As God *appoints a time to every purpoſe*, ſo ſhould we, and ſuch a time as is moſt fit and agreeable to it. Prov. 15. 23. Eccl. 3. 1.

Secondly, A careful *avoiding*, or vigorous *reſiſting* of temptations. Many temptations may be avoided by a prudent care, and by circumſpect walking, which is a great evidence of wiſdom: (*ſee that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe*: ſayes the *Apoſtle*.) And this we are obliged to, that we may not ſin againſt our own *prayers*; for if we pray that God would not *lead us into temptation*, 'tis but reaſonable that we ſhould 2. Eph. 5. 15.

ſhould not fooliſhy *run* into it our ſelves. We may ſhun a multitude of entangling ſnares, if we tread with Caution. And thoſe temptations which are avoidable, ſhould be vigorouſly withſtood; we muſt not yeild, or comply with them in the *leaſt*, but after the moſt ſteady reſolute manner oppoſe our ſelves to their *firſt aſſaults*. This is the way to come off with victory, and keep our conſciences pure. Without doing ſo, we give great advantages to Satan, and it will be impoſſible to *eſcape* or *overcome* the various difficulties which beſet us in every condition of life.

3. Thirdly, A *meek and patient bearing* of afflictions. Much wiſdom is ſeen in this; for it is the groſſeſt folly in the world, to make our *load* at any time the *greater* by *uneaſie ſtrugglings* under it. A great deal of the *art* and *myſtery* of practical Chriſtianity, lyes in *ſuffering according to the will of God*. All that are afflicted, do not ſuffer *ſo*: they ſuffer indeed what God in his *providence* thinks fit to *inflict*, (and they cannot do otherwiſe) but they do not ſuffer, as God in his *word* is pleaſed to *direct*; many ſuffer according to the *diſpoſing* will of God, who in their ſufferings regard not his *commanding* will. In the moſt proſperous ſtate there oftentimes happens a mixture of diſappointments and loſſes, and *perſonal* evills, (if we are freed from *Publick* ones) which one who is truly and ſavingly wiſe, will quietly and calmly undergo; whereas 'tis one of the Characters of a Fool, to *Rage*. We cannot make our caſe the *better* by fretting and ſtriving againſt God, but ſhall certainly make it worſe.

1 Pet. 4. 19.

Prov. 14. 16.

4. Fourthly, A *diligent improving* of mercies for the Glory of God, and good of our Brethren. This is ſureſt

ſureſt courſe of *thriving* in *this* world, and *laying up a good foundation* for the *next*. The rule of the Goſpel does not bind any to *waſt* and *conſume* their Eſtates by an *imprudent Prodigality* (for this is not to honour God) but yet it warns them againſt a baſe and ſinful *Covetouſneſs* in *Hording up* of what they are called to *Lay out*. The Charitable man is *wiſe for himſelf*, when the wretched niggard is only wiſe for a *doubtful poſterity*. And, is there not more wiſdom in *ſcattering* upon Earth, that we may *reap* in Heaven, than in *gathering* for we *know not whom*? Is it not better to *make to our ſelves friends of the mammon of unrightouſneſs*, than to leave it perhaps to ſuch, who may *curſe our memory*, while they *rejoyce in our labour*? When God gives us *richly to enjoy*, 'tis no ſign of diſcretion for us to *give ſparingly*. If we believe the Scripture (Confirm'd by the *Experience* of many) this is more likely to *impair* our wealth, than to *increaſe* it. *There is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty*: Whereas *the liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat*. The bountiful giver wiſely *prevents* what the ſordid worldling *fears*. Luke 16. 9. Prov. 11. 24, 25.

Fifthly, a *Curbing* and *reſtraining* of our affections and appetites to lawful things. It is unſafe, and therefore an unwiſe thing, to go to the *utmoſt bounds* of what we may do. *Solomon* tells us in this Book, which is the *memorial* of his *Repentance*, that *whatſoever his eyes deſired, he kept not from them, and he withheld not his heart from any joy*. For ought we know, the taking of ſo great a liberty, might be an Introduction to his *fall*; becauſe the paſſage is quick and eaſie many times from *lawful fruitions* to *unlawful ſenſualities*. *Mortification* and *Self-denyal* ſhould not be ſtrange 5. chap. 2. 10.

things to us; the more we *indulge* our flesh, the more insolent and *unruly* it will be; and that which it seems now modestly to *crave*, hereafter it may imperiously *command*. Tis best always to *abridge* our selves a little, even of *innocent* enjoyments and delights, lest at length our *Back* or our *Belly* should come to
Isa. 46. 6. be *our God*, and we *lavish gold out of the bag* as much upon our *lusts*, as they whom the *Prophet* speaks of, did upon their *Idols*.

6. Sixthly, A continual *watching* over our fences, and strict *Government* of our Tongues. 'Tis a main
Job 31. 1. branch of holy wisdom to *make and keep a Covenant* with our *eyes* and *ears*, that they may not *betray* us into sin *on a sudden*, and before we are aware. They prove two often *In lets* to the Devil, and *out lets* to abundance of corruption, if they are not narrowly *observ'd*, and constantly *guarded*. 'Tis no unheard of thing, for the eye and ear not only to *Affect* the heart but to make way for *Polluting* it; and therefore the heart should be very vigilant with respect to them. Nor is there any thing will discover more or greater wisdom, than the *bridling of our Tongues*;
Jam. 3. 2. the *Apostle James* recommends this as one of the most important matters in Religion: *if any man offend not*
Prov. 10. 19. *in word, the same is a perfect man. Solomon* (a very able and sufficient Judge) tells us, *he that refraineth his lips, is wise*; not he that is alwayes *silent*, but he whose speech is not infected with *vanity* or *sin*. *A*
Eccles. 5. 3. *fool's voice* (sayes the same Author) *is known by the multitude of words*; if there be nothing else to distinguish him, he commonly carries this *mark in his mouth*. The greatest *quickness of apprehension* should be accompanied with a *slowness to speak*; for the *little*

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member many times does *no little miſchief.* The managing of it, is of mighty conſequence, as to our *ſtanding* or *falling* before the bar of God: *By thy words* (ſays our Saviour) *thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be Condemned.* Matth. 12. 37.

Seventhly, A Behaviour *Sutable* to thoſe *Relations* wherein we ſtand. *David* is commended by the Holy Ghoſt for *behaving himſelf wiſely in all his wayes,* with reference to *Saul,* that is, both as a *Son-in-law,* and a *Subject.* And afterwards, when he came to the *Throne* he kept his reſolution of *behaving himſelf wiſely in a perfect way,* and *walking within his Houſe* (as a *Maſter,* and within his *Kingdom* as a *Magiſtrate*) *with a perfect heart.* No one ſtands ſo *alone* and ſo *independently by himſelf* in this world, but that he is cloathed with one relation or other towards ſome of his Fellow creatures; we are not like *Melchiſedeck, without deſcent,* not dropt *out of* Heaven, as *Enoch* was tranſlated *into* it. Every one is either *in authority* or *under* it, a Superiour or an Inferiour; and to deport our ſelves agreeably to our *particular ſtate,* is a conſiderable part of Spiritual wiſedom. This will teach us how to carry it as we ought, with reſpect to thoſe that are *above* us, *below* us, and *equal* with us. 7. 1 Sam. 18. 5, 14. Pſal. 101. 2. Heb. 7. 3.

Eighthly, An *unexceptionable* and *inoffenſive* converſation before all, even *ſtrangers* and *enemies.* 'Tis a great Apoſtolical precept, *walk in wiſedom towards them that are without*; do not furniſh them with *dirt* to caſt upon you, by any *foul* unjuſtifiable action. It was a ſad ſlip both of *Abraham* and *Sarah* to give ſuch an occaſion of *reproving* them to *Abimelech,* an *Heathen Prince.* Whatever calumnies are *fram'd* by our *obſervers,* we ſhould live ſo, as that nothing may 8. Coloſ. 4. 5. Gen. 20. 16.

be *found in us*; that though their malice may prompt them to *Accuſe*, they may not be able to *Convince us* of ſin. The exacteſt *Righteouſnes* and integrity in all our dealings, is the beſt prudence; the gain of a *falſe ballance* is in a ſpecial ſenſe, *deceitful riches*. *He that*
Jerem. 17. 11. *getteth wealth and not by right ſhall leave it in the midſt of his dayes, and at his End ſhall be a fool*: *i. e.* he ſhall then appear to be ſo. But as we ſhould be wiſely carefull to do nothing which may *really injure*, ſo nothing which may *needleſſy offend* another: beſides the law of *Equity*, there is a *law of kindneſs* to be obſerved, that our converſations may be blameleſs; we muſt beware not only of the ſmalleſt violation of *juſtice*, but of the neglect of *civil courteſie* to the worſt of men. A *rough* and a *peeviſh* temper is both a *greivance* to our ſelves, and *reproach* to Religion: the *churl*
1 Sam. 25. 17. who *cannot be ſpoken to*, is more like a *Son of Belial*, than a *child of God*.

II. The *Second* Thing, is to enquire, what may be reaſonably lookt upon as a *competent Inheritance*. In
Prov. 30. 8. General, 'tis eaſily determined by *Agur's prayer*; that which comes up to his *point*, and ſets us in a *middle ſtate* between *Poverty* and *Riches*, is a full anſwer to the preſent Queſtion. *Preſſing Indigency*, and *overflowing Abundance* are the extreams on both hands, and attended with dangerous Temptations. Mens circumſtances and occaſions indeed are very different and various; ſo that what is *ſufficient* to *one*, may not be ſo to *all*; but every one may take his meaſures by the Three following Rules.

1. Firſt, That which affords the *moſt conveniences* with the *feweſt burdens*, is a truly competent Inheritance. They that are in continual ſtreights, and always

ways *ſeek their Bread* as *out of deſolate places*, are apt to be ſunk and *bowed down* on one hand; and they that live in *extraordinary fulneſs*, are as much diſtracted and perplext on the other hand, and their ſouls *cut aſunder* (as it were) and torn in pieces by *multitude of Thoughts*. The caſe lyes plainly thus; they that have *too little*, are oppreſt with *neceſſary* cares, and they that have *too much* are tormented with *unneceſſary* ones; but they that have *enough* (and no more) are *moſt free* from both ſorts of cares, and enjoy *moſt comfort*. Pſal. 109. 10.

Secondly, That Inheritance which places us *below Envy*, and *above Contempt*, is a true competency. If we are *too high*, we ſhall be objects of *more ſpite* and malice; many will look upon us with an *Evil eye*, and be oftentimes prone to *cenſure* and condemn us for our moſt innocent and lawful actions; it may be, our proſperity will provoke ſome to *endeavour our ruine*, and ſeek our deſtruction; as *Joſeph's brethren hated him, and would not ſpeak peaceably unto him*, but plotted his overthrow, and that which was next to his *Murder*, becauſe he inherited moſt of his *Fathers Love*. If we are *too low*, every one will be apt to *trample* upon us, and treat us with ſcorn; *Job*, that was *reverenc'd* ſo much in his time of plenty, was equally *ſleighted* in his poverty: If he *intreated his Servants, they would give him no Anſwer*; nay (which was yet worſe) *young children deſpiſed him, and when he aroſe, they ſpake againſt him*. It is beſt to be in ſuch a condition betwixt *exceſſive* Greatneſs and Meanneſs, that we may be ſafe both from the *blaſts* of Envy, and from the *foot of Pride*; that others may not be tempted to *repine* at us, nor be able to *inſult over* us. 2. Gen. 37. 4. Job 19. 16. verſe 18.

Thirdly,

3. Thirdly, That which exempts us from the *neceſſity of receiving*, and furniſhes us with an *ability of giving*, is a very deſirable State, and a really ſufficient Inheritance. Men are commanded to *work with their*
Eph. 4. 28. *hands the thing which is good, that they may have to give to him that needeth.* It is not ſo good to *live upon Alms* as to have the *power of beſtowing* them; and our *Sa-*
Acts 20. 35. *viour* hath told us, that *It is more bleſſed to give, than to receive.* It is troubleſome and uneaſie to be in the *condition of Beggars* our ſelves, or to have *crowds of Beggars* always at our doors; the beſt is, to be capable of releiving a *few*, and not to ſtand in want of releif from *any*. He that can *diſpenſe* his own Charity *ſometimes*, and is *never* forc't to *crave* it from others, may very well ſit down with ſatisfaction.

III. The *Third* thing, is to ſhew, wherein the *Profitableneſs* of Wiſdom and an Inheritance *together* does appear. This may be open'd diſtinctly under two Branches.

1. Firſt, It is very manifeſt, that an *Inheritance* is profitable with Wiſdom. *The Crown of the wiſe,* (ſayes *Solomon*) *is their Riches. i. e.* They are a ſingular ornament and advantage to them. And that in two reſpects.

1. Firſt, Riches add a *Reputation* to what men ſay and do. The World will have no regard to them that *ſit at the Footſtool.* If *real worth* have not the acceſſion of outward things to *recommend* it, it is *as nothing* to
Eccleſ. 9. 16. the generality of Men. *The poor mans Wiſdom is deſpiſed, and his words are not heard.* *Solomon* was the more famous for his wiſdom, becauſe he was a *Prince*; his *prudence* was the more extolled, becauſe his *perſon*
Prov. 19. 7. was in honour. If a poor man *purſues even his Friends with*

with words, they ſeldom prevail; and upon *Strangers* much leſs. An Inheritance will procure us ſome *Credit* and Eſteem, and by that means our words and actions will have the greater *acceptance* and ſucceſs.

Secondly, Riches give Men the opportunity of *ſerving God and their Generation* better than others. They may be made the inſtruments of advancing God's *name*, promoting his *intereſt*, and of doing *much good* to others, as well as helps in the *working out of our own Salvation*. When wiſdom is without a competency of Wealth, 'tis a great inconvenience and obſtruction to the exerciſe of ſeveral *Graces*, and diſcharge of ſeveral *duties*, which would be profitable not only to our ſelves, but to the Publick. There may be pious *inclinations* and deſires, but the mans *wings* are *clipt*, and his *hands tyed* from *executing of* them; as the *Apoſtle* ſaid in another caſe, *to will is preſent with me, but how to perform* that which I would, *I find not*. The *narrowneſs* of a mans *Eſtate* does oft-often hinder the diſcovery of the *largeneſs* of his *Heart*. 2. Rom. 7. 18.

Secondly, It is much more manifeſt, that *wiſdom* is very beneficial with an Inheritance. *Nabal*, a *rich Fool*, was an unſociable Churl, and the burden of the Earth; though his *belly was filled with* conſiderable *Treaſures*, yet his *Heart* being *hid from underſtanding*, it almoſt unfitted him to live among Mankind. Two Things will evince this more particularly. 2.

Firſt, Wiſdom *prevents the miſchief* which Riches *alone* might do. How often are they *hurtful to the Owners*, as well as to others, when *Folly is with them*! As, when they make Men arrogant and *High-minded*, 1. Eccleſ. 5. 13.

or

or vain and *wanton*, or ſenſual and *Earthly*. What ill effects do they produce, when they encourage Men to *oppreſs* and wrong their Inferiours; when they become *inſtruments of cruelty* to *pierce the hearts*, and to *grind the faces of the poor*! Then it muſt be acknowledged, that they are like *heavy talents*, which *weigh* Men down the *ſooner* to Hell, and *ſink* them the
2 Sam. 18. 9. *deeper* in it: Or like *Abſalom's hair*, which proved the means of his death, while he was ſeemingly *lifted* nearer towards Heaven. Holy wiſdom is the only powerful remedy againſt all ſuch fatal abuſes of our Temporal good things.

2. Secondly, As wiſedom keeps them from being miſcheivous, ſo it makes them *poſitively uſeful*. *Wiſdom*
Eccleſ. 10. 10. *is profitable to direct*; it teaches Men how to employ their wealth in the beſt and moſt advantagious manner, and to *lay it out* ſo, as to *receive their own* again with the moſt plentiful *increaſe*, by a kind of *ſacred Uſury*. It ſhews Men how to turn their riches into a *Treaſure* which can neither be *loſt*, nor *corrupted*; to *exchange* their *Silver and Gold* for a *Crown of Life*, and an *eternal inheritance in the Kingdom of God*. Chriſtian wiſdom does indeed *conſecrate* that to God, which corrupt Nature would *ſacrifice* to the Devil, and writes *Holineſs to the Lord* upon thoſe Eſtates, which might otherwiſe be fram'd into *weapons of unrighteouſneſs*. The fleſh is very apt to manage them *againſt* God, but Grace renders them ſerviceable *for* him. Then may *the brother of low degree rejoyce in be-*
Jam. 1. 9. *ing exalted*, and apply that part of *Jobs Thankſgiving* very juſtly to his own caſe, *The Lord hath given*,
Job 1. 21. *bleſſed be the name of the Lord*.

The

The *Fourth* and laſt Thing, is to make ſome *Application* of the preſent Truth. It is improvable *two ways*. IV.

Firſt, By way of *Confutation* and *Reproof*. Two Things may be inſtanc'd in, which fall under the *Edge* of this Doctrine. 1.

Firſt, It confutes that *Popiſh principle*, which magnifies *voluntary poverty*. It is beſide my purpoſe here, to inſiſt upon the *Juggle* and the *Cheat* which there is commonly in this; (for under the *Veil*, and *Cloak* of pretended *Mortification* to the World, they not onely ſubſiſt by *Idleneſs*, but many times raiſe *unſeen* Eſtates,) nor does it concern me now to lay open the *abſurd contradiction* which there is in this, to ſome of their other *receiv'd opinions*; (as particularly, that *outward grandeur* and proſperity is a *mark* of the *true Church*) but upon this occaſion which the Text fairly gives, I would only intimate how falſe and unagreeable it is to the Scripture-account. Voluntary poverty is not only againſt the *Dictate of Nature*, (becauſe it is the chuſing of a *real evil*) but againſt the *ſtream of the Word* of God. It is an excluding of our ſelves from the benefit of all thoſe *promiſes* which perhaps God might think good for us to reap; As, that *the Righteous ſhall inherit the Land*, and *the meek ſhall inherit the Earth*. It is to make our ſelves ſuch a *Curſe* as wicked Men are often threatned to be; as, to be *cloathed with rags*, reduced to *a morſel of bread*, &c. If it be reckon'd as one of the Characters (tho' not an *eſſential* one) of *a good man*, that he *leaves an Inheritance to his Childrens Children*, it cannot be our *duty* to caſt it away from us, and thereby to deprive them of the *hopeful reverſion*, as well as our ſelves of the *comfortable poſſeſſion*. Riches are 1. Pſal. 37. 29. Matth. 5. 5. Prov. 13. 22.

not things ſo *utterly inconſiſtent* with Salvation, as that they muſt be *neceſſarily relinquiſh't* and renounc't in order to it.

2. Secondly, It reproves that too *general practiſe* on the other hand, of *over-valuing* a *Temporal Eſtate*, even to the *contempt of Religion*. It is a very eaſie and common miſtake, to ſet an *extravagant price* upon the good things of this Life, and at the ſame time to *diſparage*, aud think meanly of what is infinitely better. When Men put the *World in their hearts*, a *Title of Honour* ſhall be preferr'd to the *New Name*, and to be *clad in Scarlet* ſhall be reckon'd a greater priviledge, than to have *Robes waſht white in the Blood of the Lamb*. Indeed there can be no *Righteous Judgment*, no diſcerning or *approving of things that are excellent*, where the Love of the World prevails; for the mind is alwayes ſo far *blinded* by Satan (the *God of this World*) that every thing is ſeen in *a falſe Light*. Some Men are ſo fond of being deceiv'd, that they ſeem to
Eccl. 10. 19. pleaſe themſelves with the fancy of *Money anſwering all things*; not conſidering, that though the *expreſſion* is *unlimited*, it muſt have a *limited ſignification*; for our *principal wants* cannot be *ſupplied* by Silver and
1 Tim. 4. 8. Gold. *Godlineſs is profitable for all things*, in the largeſt ſenſe, becauſe it hath the *promiſes of the preſent and future Life*; it extends to the relief of our *Earthly* and our *Heavenly* part, our *outward* and our *inward Man*. But there are many *calls* (eſpecially thoſe that are moſt *loud* and urgent) which *Money* cannot *anſwer to*; the *hungry* and *thirſty* and *naked Soul* cannot be *fed*, or *ſatisfied*, or *cloathed* by it, though in *ſuch caſes* it may aſſiſt and refreſh the *Body*. *Mammon* is fit, as a *Servant* to *miniſter to* us, but cannot be a *God* to *Save* us.

Se-

Secondly, It affords proper matter of *Exhortation*. 2.
Two things ought to be preſt, as *conſequent* upon what hath been ſaid.

Firſt, Whether *Riches increaſe*, or *decreaſe*, do not 1.
think of them above what is written. If they *come in like a floud* upon you, let not that *lift you up*; if they *Ebb* and decline as much, let not that *caſt you down.* Remember ſtill, how far the true eſtimate and value of them will reach, that you may not judge your condition *bettered* by the *ſmiles* of Providence, nor *made worſe* by its *frowns*, beyond what really it is. It it our duty to be *thankful*, when God proſpers us in the World, and to be *contented* when he does not; but the ſinful *Lovers of abundance*, are alwayes *leaſt ſenſible of Gods goodneſs* in beſtowing it, and yet *moſt impatient*, whenever he does diminiſh it. In *every ſtate* therefore bear this upon your thoughts, that the *having* of an Inheritance is not the *chiefeſt good*, and the *loſs* of it is not the *greateſt evil.*

Secondly, Let *Religion* be the *main buſineſs* and em- 2.
ployment of your Lives. Conſider that your *General Calling*, as Chriſtians, is of more concern, than your *particular Vocation*, as Men. Let *Spiritual* things have the conſtant precedency to *Temporal*. *Seek firſt* Matth. 6. 33.
the Kingdom and Righteouſneſs of God, and then you may chearfully expect that *other things will be added unto you.* The way to obtain every thing in a *fit Meaſure*, is to ſeek every thing in the *right order.* Be moſt careful and ſollicitous about the *one thing* Luk. 10. 41, 42.
needful, before the other *many things*, which are of far leſs importance; *chuſe the good part*, and do your utmoſt to ſecure it. 'Tis better, that your *whole worldly portion* ſhould be neglected and hazarded, than *this*. *With all thy gettings* (ſays the *Wiſeman*) *get*

Prov. 4. 7. *understanding.* Without it, though you should *heap up silver as the dust*, you are the *poorest* and most miserable creatures upon Earth; and the *Apostle's Motto* must be *inverted*, if it be *transferr'd* to you; 2 Cor. 6. 10. *As having nothing* indeed, when you seem to *possess all things.* Therefore in order to the *Acquiring* and *Improving* of Holy wisdom, follow these Six *Directions.*

Direct. I. First, Go to God for it by *prayer.* This is both a necessary and successful means; the regular appointed way of receiving *every gift which comes down from above.* There is ('tis true) a *natural humane wisdom* which may be increas'd and perfected by a man's own *Industry*; and there is a *fleshly Deviliſh* wisdom, which is *learn't* with *too much ease* and speed; but real *saving* wisdom is *first infused* at the New birth, and *further degrees* of it *freely communicated* afterwards by the spirit of God. Folly is *born* and *bred* with us; it is *bound up in our hearts*, when we are *children*, *grows up* with us, when we are *young men*; and as we *increase* in age and stature, we increase our fooliſhness, till God renews Jam. 1. 5. and *enlightens* our minds. *If any of you lack wisdom* (as there is none that does not) *let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally* (*i. e.* to all that ask) *and upbraideth not*; *and it shall be given him.* Men that contrive and *labour to be rich*, are not sure that Eccles. 9. 11. they shall prosper; for *Bread is not to the wise*; there is a great uncertainty of event in all such cases; but Prov. 2. 3,4,5. he that *cryes after knowledge, and lifts up his voice* (with his Heart to Heaven) *for understanding*, ought to be confident of prevailing; he sins, if he doubts of his success; if he be *denyed*, 'tis because he questions his 1 King. 3. 11, 12, 13. being *heard.* God liked *Solomon's petition* so well, that he gave him in *answer* to it, not only *good measure*

ſure, but *running over*; both that which he askt, and a great deal more.

Secondly, Study and *Meditate in the Word.* This 2.
is that which *makes the ſimple wiſe*; which made *Da-* Pſal. 19. 7.
vid himſelf *wiſer than his Enemies*, (notwithſtanding their *ſubtilty*), and *his Teachers* (notwithſtanding their 119. 98,
Learning), and the *Ancients* (notwithſtanding their 99, 100.
large Experience.) This made *Timothy wiſe to ſalvation*, and he is therefore commended, that *from a Child he* 2 Tim. 3. 15.
had known the Holy Scriptures. The more Men make uſe of this *Lamp*, the more *Light* will ſhine every day *into their minds*, and *upon their wayes.* Thoſe hearts in which the *word of Chriſt dwells moſt richly*, contain the greateſt *Treaſures* of the beſt wiſdom. If Gods *Teſtimonies* be your *Counſellours*, and the *Bible* your *Oracle*, and continual *Companion*, your *profiting will appear to all.* The reaſon of that *damning Ignorance* which abounds even in the *Reformed Chriſtian* World, is mens ſhameful *unacquaintedneſs* with the Word of God.

Thirdly, Chuſe the *Society* of thoſe, who are moſt 3.
inſtructed to the Kingdom of Heaven. *Converſe* with the *children of Light*; not with thoſe whoſe *underſtandings are darkened*, who *love ſimplicity*, and love to propagate it, who *live in errour*, and would lead others into it. *He that walketh with wiſe men, ſhall be* Prov. 13. 20.
wiſe; one *ſpark of Light* may help to *kindle* another. But expect not to *receive good* from thoſe who *are evil* themſelves; that ſaying of our *Saviour* to the *Phariſees*, is a ſufficient diſcouragement, *Oh generation of* Matth. 12. 34.
Vipers, how can you being evil, ſpeak good things? Their *diſcourſes* are not likely to *miniſter Grace*, but to *infect with ſin.* He who is in purſuit of that *underſtanding which is a well ſpring of Life*, muſt not go and *ſeek it among*

among the Dead. 'Tis dangerous to be their *Familiars*, who are *ſtrangers to God.*

4. Fourthly, Be ready to *take the Counſels* and *reproofs* of thoſe that are wiſe and good. This will be an
Prov. 9. 9. *evidence*, that God hath given us *ſome wiſdom* already, and it is the proper courſe to be *yet wiſer*, *and increaſe*
12. 1. *in Learning*. *Whoſo loveth inſtruction, loveth knowledge, but he that hateth reproof, is brutiſh. q. d.* he is not a reaſonable Creature, but a Beaſt. They are no better than *Swine* that *trample upon Pearls*, when caſt before them. A *poor and a wiſe Child is* preferred to an
Eccleſ. 4. 13. *old and fooliſh king, who will not be admoniſhed.* The ſtubbornneſs of *Rehoboam*, in oppoſition to the advice of his Fathers Counſellours, ended in the loſs of the far greater part of his Kingdom; and in more private caſes many times, mens *leaning to* their own judgments and *walking after the ſight of their own eyes*, hath been very fatal. Seaſonable and *prudent rebukes* ſhould be accepted always with all thankfulneſs, as the trueſt, and moſt valuable *acts of Friendſhip.*

5. Fifthly, Endeavour to ſubdue both *pride* and *paſſion*; becauſe both of them are great Enemies to *ſound Wiſdom.* *Humility* makes men *teachable*; there-
Prov. 3. 7. fore *be not wiſe in your own eyes*, learn this rule both
Rom. 12. 16. from *Solomon*, and the *Apoſtle Paul.* Strive to *ſee* your own *blindneſs*, and be not *dazled* with a *falſe reflexion* of your own abilities. 'Tis eaſie to obſerve, that they who are *moſt puffi up*, are *leaſt enlightned*, and men who think that they have the *cleareſt know-*
1 Cor. 8. 2. *ledge*, are generally *clouded* with the *groſſeſt ignorance.* Take heed alſo of *giving place to wrath*; for this is a *Devil*, which above all others, will ſooneſt *deface the Image of God* on the underſtanding. What mad un-

ad-

adviſed actions do mens furious unbridled paſſions hurry them into! How do they put men *beſide themſelves*, and expoſe them to the *juſt ſcorn* of their fellow-creatures? The Scripture doth not ſay in vain, or without cauſe, that *He who is haſty of ſpirit, exalteth folly, i. e.* he lifts it up, as it were, in the open view of others. *Meekneſs of wiſdom* is recommended by the Holy Ghoſt; as if there could be no wiſdom, where Meekneſs is not. A *cool head*, and *underſtanding heart* are linkt together; ſo that if we do not ſuppreſs the *heat* of Anger, we ſhall extinguiſh the *light* of knowledge.

Prov. 14. 29.

Jam. 3. 13.

Sixthly, Live in the conſtant *vigorous ſenſe* of *approaching death*. If any thing will make men *apply their hearts to wiſdom*, (for the wiſdom which we ſpeak of, is the *wiſdom of the Heart*, more than *of the Head*) it muſt be a *right numbring of their dayes*. The common follies of mankind, who mind nothing but *buying and ſelling and getting of gain*, do ſpring from hence that they do not conſider what a thin *vaniſhing vapour our life is*. The *Religiouſly prudent* men of *this* World, are ſuch as always *reckon* themſelves to be upon the borders of *another*; we cannot be truly *wiſe*, without *underſtanding our latter end*. According as every one is ſenſible of, and ſeriouſly Thoughtful about, his *preſent mortality*, he will be wiſe for a *future Eternity*; that Man who *walks among the Tombs*, and *makes the Grave his Houſe*, is beſt fitted both to *Uſe* the World, and to *Leave* it; he will be a *bleſſing to others* while he lives, and he himſelf ſhall be *bleſſed with God*, when he *comes to Dye*.

6.

Pſal. 90. 12.

Jam. 4. 13, 14.

Deut. 32. 29.

THE END.

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